

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6770  
INFO USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 0766

EXDIS

USSALTTWO

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PARM, SALT, UR, US  
SUBJECT: SENATOR STEVENSON-ARBATOV DISCUSSION OF SALT

SUMMARY: DURING SENATOR STEVENSON'S HOUR AND ONE HALF MEETING WITH ARBATOV, BOGDANOV, SHERSHNEV AND MILSTEIN OF THE USA INSTITUTE JANUARY 16, HE STATED AT LENGTH HIS OWN CONCERNS ABOUT THE EVOLVING SALT AGREEMENT AND ELICITED ARBATOV'S REACTIONS INCLUDING THE MAJOR PROBLEM AREAS WHICH THE LATTER SEES. SEPARATE CABLE REPORTS ON TRADE, MIDDLE EAST AND GENERAL U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. ARBATOV OPENED THE MAIN DISCUSSION OF SALT BY NOTING THE "SAD BEGINNING" IN MARCH OF 1977 WHICH HE SAID COMPLICATED MATTERS BUT WHICH WAS FOLLOWED BY "SOME MUTUAL UNDERSTANDINGS" REACHED IN SEPT. THE CURRENT PERIOD IS ONE IN WHICH ARBATOV CONSIDERS THAT THERE ARE STILL "SOME PROBLEMS LEFT" TO BE RESOLVED BEFORE REACHING AN AGREEMENT. SALT II IS A "NECESSARY STEP" TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOAL OF CONTROL AND REDUCTION OF STRATEGIC NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS. ARBATOV HINTED AT  
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WHAT HE BELIEVED WERE SOME INDICATIONS THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAD SOME DOUBTS ABOUT THE ACCEPTABILITY OF PARTS OF THE AGREEMENT THUS FAR REACHED, IN PARTICULAR WITH RESPECT TO THE ABILITY TO GAIN SENATE ACCEPTANCE. HE COUNTERED THIS BY ASSERTING THAT HE SAW NOTHING IN THE AGREEMENT WHICH WOULD ENDANGER THE SECURITY OF EITHER SIDE AND THAT

NOT ONLY WOULD THE U.S. NOT FIND ITSELF IN A POSITION OF "INFERIORITY" BUT THAT IT CURRENTLY HAS A "SLIGHT EDGE."

2. SENATOR STEVENSON RESPONDED BY INDICATING TWO AREAS WHICH HE FELT WERE OF MAJOR CONCERN TO HIMSELF AND TO OTHERS IN THE U.S. SENATE. THE FIRST WAS THE ISSUE OF MODERNIZATION AND THE NEED FOR QUALITATIVE RESTRICTIONS TO BE WRITTEN INTO THE SALT AGREEMENT. IN ORDER TO AVOID WHAT HE REFERRED TO AS A "QUALITATIVE ARMS RACE" IN THE FUTURE ONCE QUANTITATIVE RESTRICTIONS HAVE BEEN PLACED ON STRATEGIC SYSTEMS, THERE MUST BE SOME LIMITS PLACED ON MODERNIZATION. IF THIS WAS NOT TREATED IN THE CURRENT AGREEMENT THEN HE FORESAW TROUBLE IN THE U. S. SENATE ON RATIFICATION.

3. SECONDLY, SENATOR STEVENSON CITED A MAJOR CONCERN WITH RESPECT TO VERIFICATION. BOTH SIDES, HE SAID, RELIED HEAVILY ON NATIONAL TECHNICAL MEANS TO INSURE THAT A SALT AGREEMENT IS BEING COMPLIED WITH BY THE OTHER SIDE. THE U.S. PUBLIC IN PARTICULAR WILL REQUIRE ASSURANCES THAT THE U.S. CAN VERIFY THAT THE AGREEMENT IS BEING HONORED ONCE IT IS REACHED. THEREFORE, HE SAID, IT WAS DISTURBING TO SEE "INCONSISTENT" ACTIVITIES BEING UNDERTAKEN ON THE SOVIET  
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SIDE WHICH THREATEN THE RELIABILITY AND DEPENDABILITY OF NATIONAL TECHNICAL MEANS. WHEN PRESSED FOR SPECIFICS, THE SENATOR STATED THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS PROOF THAT THE SOVIET UNION IS TESTING ANTI-SATELLITE SYSTEMS AND THAT THIS IS PRODUCING PRESSURES IN THE UNITED STATES TO DO THE SAME THING.

4. ARBATOV RESPONDED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THE PROBLEM, BUT THAT THERE WERE SUSPICIONS ON "OUR SIDE" ALSO THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS OR IS CAPABLE OF PRODUCING THESE ANTI-SATELLITE SYSTEMS. THEREFORE, HE SUGGESTED THAT THIS ISSUE SHOULD BE A SUBJECT OF SPECIAL NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES SINCE HE BELIEVED IT WAS IN THE INTEREST OF NEITHER SIDE THAT SUCH SYSTEMS UPSET THE STABILITY WHICH IS THE ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE OF A SALT AGREEMENT. THE SENATOR REPLIED THAT HE BELIEVED SUCH DISCUSSIONS WOULD HAVE TO BEAR FRUIT BEFORE A SALT AGREEMENT GOES TO THE SENATE FOR RATIFICATION.

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5. ARBATOV TURNED TO THE QUESTION OF MODERNIZATION WITH THE COMMENT THAT THE SOVIETS ALSO WERE CONCERNED ABOUT THIS AND HE CITED NEW BALLISTIC MISSILE SYSTEMS, NEW WARHEADS AND THE PRODUCTION OF CRUISE MISSILES AS THE MAJOR CONCERNS OF THE SOVIET UNION WITH RESPECT TO MODERNIZATION. ON THE QUESTION OF VERIFICATION HE CONTENDED THAT THERE WAS A SOVIET CONCERN PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO CRUISE MISSILES WHICH "YOU HAVE, BUT WE DO NOT HAVE." HE SUGGESTED THAT IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO DISCUSS THE POSSIBILITY OF AGREEMENT NOT TO DEVELOP NEW SYSTEMS WHICH COMPLICATE AND MAKE MORE DIFFICULT VERIFICATION OF A SALT AGREEMENT.

6. IN RESPONSE TO A SPECIFIC QUESTION ARBATOV LISTED THREE MAJOR CONCERNS OF THE SOVIETS WITH RESPECT TO THE CURRENT AGREEMENT BEING CONSIDERED. THE FIRST WAS THE SOVIETS WERE UNCLEAR AS TO THE "TIMETABLE" WHICH THE ADMINISTRATION HAD IN MIND FOR CONCLUDING THE CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS. HE RECOGNIZED THE PANAMA CANAL TREATY AND OTHER ISSUES  
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WERE COMPLICATING THE SCHEDULE AND FELT THAT,IF

NECESSARY, DISCUSSIONS COULD BE CONTINUED IN GENEVA UNTIL A "POLITICAL DECISION" IS MADE TO FINISH THE NEGOTIATIONS AND ADOPT THE AGREEMENT. HIS SECOND CONCERN WAS ABOUT THE SITUATION IN THE SENATE AND ITS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE ADOPTION OF ANY SALT AGREEMENT. THIRDLY, HE REITERATED HIS CONCERN ABOUT CRUISE MISSILES WHICH HE ASSERTED "TEMPT YOUR ALLIES" TO BECOME NUCLEAR POWERS BECAUSE THIS IS A CHEAP WEAPON SYSTEM AND ONE WHICH IS RELATIVELY DIFFICULT TO VERIFY. HE ADMITTED THAT THIS ASPECT OF CRUISE MISSILE WAS CHIEFLY A NONCIRCUMVENTION ISSUE.

7. IN THE LONG TERM ARBATOV SAW THREE AREAS WHICH WOULD REQUIRE THE ATTENTION OF BOTH SIDES IN ORDER TO REDUCE A TENDENCY TO DEVELOP NEW AND MORE COMPLICATED WEAPON SYSTEMS. HE BELIEVES SOME KIND OF AN AGREEMENT SHOULD BE LOOKED AT WHICH WOULD ELIMINATE SYSTEMS WHICH ENABLE ONE SIDE TO ADOPT A COUNTER-FORCE STRATEGY (AT ANOTHER POINT IN THE CONVERSATION HE SUGGESTED THAT DISCUSSIONS OF EACH OTHER'S STRATEGIC POSTURES MIGHT BE A USEFUL POST-SALT II EXERCISE), WHICH COMPLICATE VERIFICATION, AND FINALLY WHICH LOWER THE NUCLEAR THRESHOLD. WITH RESPECT TO THE THIRD, HE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED THE NEUTRON BOMB (THIS WAS HIS ONLY REFERENCE TO IT).

8. FINALLY, ARBATOV CITED TWO "ASYMMETRIES" WHICH HE CONSIDERED MUST BE DISCUSSED IN THE SALT CONTEXT. THE FIRST WAS THE STANDARD SOVIET CONTENTION ABOUT THE "GEOPOLITICAL" ASYMMETRY AND THE SECOND WAS THE "ASYMMETRY IN TIME." THIS LATTER, HE SAID, WAS  
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EXEMPLIFIED BY THE FACT THAT THE U.S. WISHES TO STOP THE CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF WEAPONS SYSTEMS NOW WHEN THE SOVIET UNION HAS NOT YET REACHED "YOUR LEVEL." HE SUGGESTED THAT THIS SECOND QUESTION MIGHT BE LOOKED AT IN THE CONTEXT OF MDW DISCUSSIONS, BUT HE MADE NO SPECIFIC PROPOSALS.  
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## Message Attributes

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